

Trying to eat better? Lace up your walking shoes!



Habits can have a domino effect. You know this from experience if, say, you've ever decided to stay up way past your bedtime, which led to you missing your morning walk or yoga class, which left you feeling tired and grumpy all day. But it can work the other way, too, with a good habit begetting another good habit—along with lots of positive vibes! If you've been trying to eat more veggies, cook at home more, or resist your favorite bakery's daily special, you might try focusing on another good habit: exercise. In a recent study, young adults who started exercising began choosing more nutritious foods and were less interested in fried food, sodas, and other poor-quality foods...even though they were directed to not change

their diets. The study didn't look into how physical activity may shift food preferences, but earlier research suggests that exercising may lower interest in high-fat foods by affecting levels of dopamine, a hormone that plays a role in pleasure and motivation. The participants in the study, who had been relatively sedentary, started doing three 30-minute aerobic workouts a week. And when they did that, they made healthier food choices, without being instructed. If you want to give it a try, commit to a routine that's realistic for you, whether that means taking 5-minute brisk walks or 45-minute swims, and build up to 150 minutes a week of moderate-intensity exercise. Notice whether your cravings and eating patterns shift.

You've heard about partners in crime.

Well, exercise and eating well can be partners in good health!